

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence gave the following speech from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives supporting the dissidents in Iran and announcing that he will introduce a resolution expressing concerns about the Iranian presidential election and condemning the violence against demonstrators:

"I come to this floor at an extraordinary moment on the global stage.

"According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, the official news agency of Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad supposedly won the election over his primary opponent on 12 June, 2009. But from the very moment that that election result was announced, the international community and the international press called it into question. The basis for that, even before the extraordinary demonstrations had begun to take place, was the fact that these were paper ballots. But the official government results of the election were announced literally within hours of the polls being closed. Various media outlets around the world questioned the authenticity of the results.

"Mr. Mousavi, the defeated candidate, has launched a legal appeal against the election results. On the day of the election, mobile phone communications were interrupted. Western media has reported, 'heavy electronic jamming, disturbing broadcasts.' News websites were reportedly blocked by Iranian authorities and the Iranian government has allegedly arrested opposition political figures and journalists. The Iranian government has outlawed any protest following two days of extraordinary unrest. The BBC recently reported that recent rallies in the streets of Tehran were the biggest demonstrations in the Islamic Republic's 30-year history.

"The protest, according to news reports, became violent and, according to media reports, pro-government forces attacked demonstrators in the last 24 hours, causing at least one fatality. We are witnessing a Tiananmen in Tehran, and the United States of America must stand in the gap on behalf of those brave Iranian citizens who are standing for free and fair elections, democracy and basic rights.

"Freedom in fact may be flowering in Iran as hundreds of thousands rally for democracy and free elections. While I appreciate President Obama's comments yesterday at the White House that he was, 'troubled by the violence,' and his belief that the voices of the

Iranian people should, be 'heard and respected,' it seems by my lights that this administration has yet to express the unqualified support of the American people for those who are courageously taking to the streets for free elections and for democracy in Iran.

"Let me say from my heart, the American cause is freedom and in this cause the American people will not be silent, here or abroad. If the President of the United States won't express the unqualified support of our nation for the dissidents in the streets of Tehran, this Congress must.

"Today I'm introducing a resolution that will do just that. It will express its concern regarding the reported irregularities of the presidential election of 12 June, 2009. It will condemn the violence against demonstrators by pro-government militia in Tehran in the wake of the elections. It will affirm our belief in the universality of individual rights and the importance of democratic and fair elections. And lastly, and most importantly, it will express the support of the American people for all Iranian citizens who struggle for freedom, civil liberties and the protection of the rule of law.

"Believe it or not in my small town of Columbus, IN, I grew up next door to a Hungarian immigrant who fled Hungary in the wake of the Soviet repression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956. I sat often with Julius Perr, now passed away, and heard of the way the Hungarian people, inspired by our calls for freedom, stood up for their own freedom. And as Brett Stephens recounts in today's Wall Street Journal we stood by idly. We didn't want to interfere. And the Soviet tanks rolled.

"We cannot stand idly by, speak of Iran's sovereignty, speak of her own right to choose her own leadership at a time when hundreds of thousands of Iranians are risking their lives to stand up for free elections and democracy.

"Ronald Reagan said, 'No arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women.' All of us desire a fresh start with Iran and it seems from news reports and the extraordinary images coming from the streets of Iran that millions of Iranians long for a new start in their government. There is a reformist movement afoot in Iran.

"Today I'll introduce a resolution. I urge all my colleagues in both parties to join me in expressing their support for these brave and courageous men and women."